

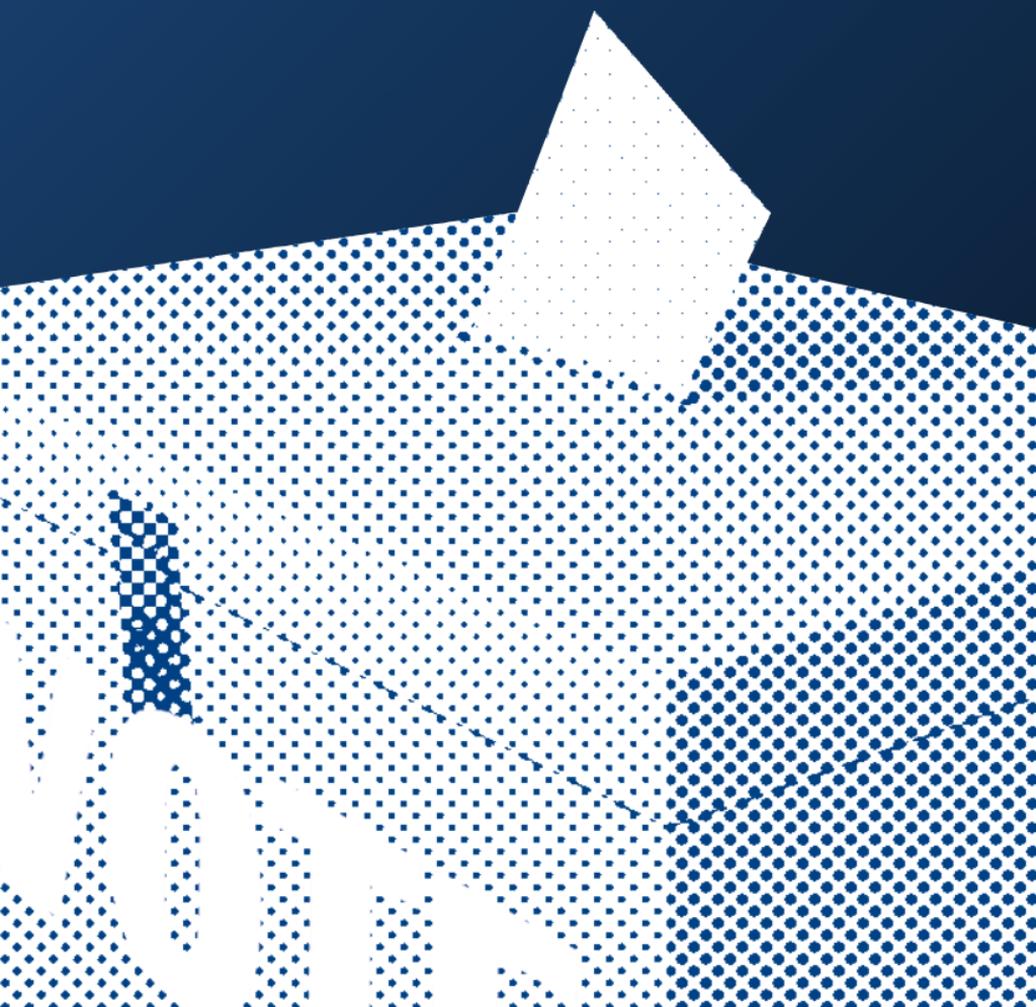


A GUIDE TO VOTING IN CALIFORNIA



MY VOICE. MY CHOICE.

MYVOTE



WHY VOTE?

Elections are one of the most important parts of a democracy. They give you the opportunity to choose laws and government leaders. Early in our nation's history, voting was highly restricted. Who could vote in an election was dictated by a person's gender and ethnicity, whether they owned land and could pass a literacy test, and other factors. People fought for many years to expand and protect voting rights.

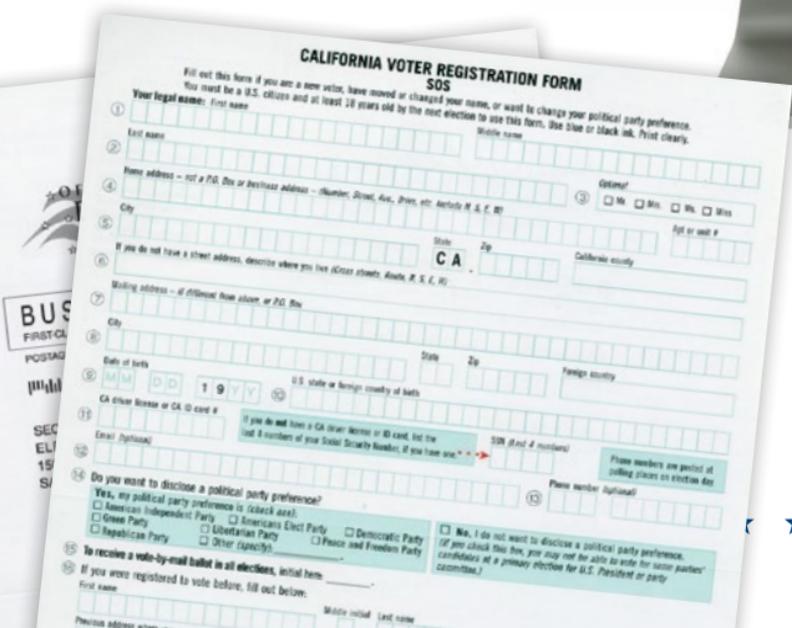
The California Secretary of State works to register every eligible person to vote, and to make it as easy as possible for registered voters to cast ballots privately and independently. This guide describes many of the rights and responsibilities of voters, and provides important information you need in order to participate in elections.



CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

To register to vote in California, you must be:

- A United States citizen,
- A resident of California,
- 18 years of age or older on Election Day,
- Not in prison, on parole, serving a state prison sentence in county jail, serving a sentence for a felony pursuant to subdivision (h) of Penal Code section 1170, or on post release community supervision, and
- Not found by a court to be mentally incompetent.



HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?

You can get a voter registration application at many places throughout the state:

- California Secretary of State website at RegisterToVote.ca.gov
- California Secretary of State Voter Hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683)
- County elections offices or city halls
- Public libraries
- Post offices
- California Department of Motor Vehicles offices
- Disability service agencies
- Public assistance agencies
- California Board of Equalization and Franchise Tax Board offices
- Armed Forces recruitment offices

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If you have a California identification card or driver license, you must provide the number on your voter registration application. If you do not have one of those two types of identification, provide the last four digits of your social security number. If you do not have a social security number but are eligible to register, you will be assigned a unique identification number for voting purposes only.

WHEN DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?

While you may register to vote at any time, in most cases you must be registered to vote at least 15 days before an election day to be eligible to vote in that election.

You must re-register to vote if you move, change your name, or want to indicate or change your political party preference.

HOW DO I INDICATE A POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE?

You may indicate whether or not you prefer one of California's qualified political parties when you register to vote. Indicating a preference with a party ensures that you can vote for that party's candidate in a presidential primary election.

If you indicate on your voter registration application that you do not prefer any political party, you will be registered as a No Party Preference (NPP) voter. In presidential primary elections, some political parties allow NPP voters to help choose their candidates. In all elections, NPP voters may vote for ballot measures and candidates running for voter-nominated, local, and nonpartisan offices.

HOW DO PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS WORK?

A primary election is held a few months before a general election. State legislative, U.S. congressional, and state constitutional offices are known as voter-nominated offices. In a primary election, all candidates for a voter-nominated office are listed on one ballot. Any voter may vote for any one candidate in each contest, regardless of party preference.

The two candidates who receive the most votes in each primary contest move on to the general election. After a top-two primary, a general election must be held even if one candidate receives a majority of the vote (50 percent +1) and even if there are only two candidates in the primary election.

This top-two primary system does not apply to candidates running for U.S. president, county central committee, or local offices.



AM I REGISTERED TO VOTE?

To check your voter registration status, contact your county elections office. To find contact information for your county, visit www.sos.ca.gov or see [page 8](#) of this brochure.

CAN I VOTE BY MAIL?

Yes, any registered voter can vote by mail. You must request a vote-by-mail ballot from your county elections office at least seven days before an election day to be eligible to vote by mail in that election. Fill out the vote-by-mail ballot application in your sample ballot booklet, find one at www.sos.ca.gov, or contact your county elections office. You may also send a written request that includes your name and the address where you live, the address where you want to receive your vote-by-mail ballot, your signature, and the name and date of the election in which you want to vote by mail.

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To find out if you have already applied to vote by mail, contact your county elections office.

To ensure it arrives by the deadline, return your ballot either:

- By mail, as long as your voted ballot is received by your county elections office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Since postmarks do not count, mail your ballot a few days before Election Day.
- In person, to your county elections office or any polling place in your county before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.



CAN I SIGN UP TO PERMANENTLY VOTE BY MAIL?

Yes, any registered voter may ask to permanently vote by mail and automatically receive a ballot for every election. You can cancel your permanent vote-by-mail status at any time. Your county elections official will only cancel your permanent vote-by-mail status if you do not vote in four consecutive statewide general elections.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT WILL BE ON MY BALLOT?

Registered voters will automatically receive the Secretary of State's Official Voter Information Guide in the mail a few weeks before Election Day. This nonpartisan guide has details about statewide ballot measures, some candidates, and voter rights.

County elections officials mail a sample ballot booklet to each registered voter. This booklet shows what your ballot will look like and includes information about local candidates, local ballot measures, your polling place address, an application for a vote-by-mail ballot, and more. The booklet also describes how voters with disabilities can vote privately and independently.

You do not have to vote in every contest on your ballot. Your vote will be counted for each contest you vote in.

The Secretary of State produces audio and large-print versions of the Official Voter Information Guide for voters who are blind or visually impaired. Guides are printed in 10 languages: English, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese. To order any version of these guides free of charge, call the Secretary of State's Voter Hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683) or visit www.sos.ca.gov.



HOW DO I VOTE AT A POLLING PLACE?

When you receive your county sample ballot booklet in the mail a few weeks before Election Day, look for your polling place on the back cover. If you do not receive your sample ballot booklet, contact your county elections office. You can also find your polling place by calling the Secretary of State's Voter Hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683) or visiting www.sos.ca.gov.

Polls are open in California from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. (Some counties also allow you to vote in person at selected locations before Election Day.)

When you arrive at your polling place, a poll worker will ask for your name and check the official list of registered voters for that polling place. After you sign next to your name on the list, the poll worker will give you a paper ballot, unique passcode, or computer memory card, depending on the voting system your county uses. Go to a private booth and begin voting. Poll workers are there to assist voters. If you are not familiar with how to mark a ballot, ask a poll worker for instructions. If you make a mistake in marking the ballot, ask a poll worker how to correct a mistake or ask for a new ballot and start over.

State and federal laws require polling places to be physically accessible to voters with disabilities. County elections officials inspect each site and often make temporary modifications to homes, libraries, churches, businesses, schools, or other facilities for Election Day. Every person who works in a polling place is trained on elections laws and the rights of voters with disabilities, including the need to make reasonable modifications of policies and procedures to ensure equal access.

State and federal laws require that all voters be able to cast their ballots privately and independently. Each polling place must have one voting machine that allows voters, including those who are blind or visually impaired, to cast a ballot without assistance. The voting machine permits you to privately and independently verify your vote choices and, if there is an error, allows you to correct those choices before submitting your final ballot.



DO I NEED TO SHOW IDENTIFICATION WHEN I VOTE?

In most cases, California voters are not required to show identification before they vote. If you are voting for the first time after registering by mail and did not provide your California identification number, driver license number, or the last four digits of your social security number on your registration application, you may be asked to show a form of identification when you go to the polls. Make sure you bring identification with you to the polls or include a copy of it with your vote-by-mail ballot. For a list of the more than 30 acceptable forms of identification, contact your county elections office or read “Polling Place ID Requirements” at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/hava.htm.

WHAT IF MY NAME IS NOT ON THE LIST AT THE POLLING PLACE?

If your name is not on the polling place list, you have the right to cast a provisional ballot. A provisional ballot looks like a regular ballot but is placed in a special envelope. The ballot will be counted after elections officials have confirmed that you are registered to vote in that county and you did not already vote in that election. A poll worker can give you information about how to check whether your provisional ballot was counted and, if it was not counted, the reason why.

WHAT IF I NEED ASSISTANCE TO VOTE?

If you need assistance in marking your ballot, you may choose one or two people to help you as long as neither is your employer, your employer’s agent, your labor union leader, or your labor union’s agent.

If curbside voting is available at your polling place, you may get as close as possible to the voting area and an elections official will bring the voting materials to you. Contact your county elections office to determine if curbside voting is available at your polling place.



COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICES

Alameda
(510) 272-6933

Alpine
(530) 694-2281

Amador
(209) 223-6465

Butte
(530) 538-7761

Calaveras
(209) 754-6376

Colusa
(530) 458-0500

Contra Costa
(925) 335-7800

Del Norte
(707) 465-0383

El Dorado
(530) 621-7480

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Fresno
(559) 600-8683

Glenn
(530) 934-6414

Humboldt
(707) 445-7481

Imperial
(760) 482-4226

Inyo
(760) 878-0224

Kern
(661) 868-3590

Kings
(559) 582-3211
ext. 4401

Lake
(707) 263-2372

Lassen
(530) 251-8217

Los Angeles
(562) 466-1310

Madera
(559) 675-7720

Marin
(415) 473-6456

Mariposa
(209) 966-2007

Mendocino
(707) 463-4371

Merced
(209) 385-7541

Modoc
(530) 233-6205

Mono
(760) 932-5537

Monterey
(831) 796-1499

Napa
(707) 253-4321

Nevada
(530) 265-1298

Orange
(714) 567-7600

Placer
(530) 886-5650

Plumas
(530) 283-6256

Riverside
(951) 486-7200

Sacramento
(916) 875-6451

San Benito
(831) 636-4029

San Bernardino
(909) 387-8300

San Diego
(858) 565-5800

San Francisco
(415) 554-4375

San Joaquin
(209) 468-2885

San Luis Obispo
(805) 781-5228

San Mateo
(650) 312-5222

Santa Barbara
(805) 568-2200

Santa Clara
(408) 299-8683

Santa Cruz
(831) 454-2060

Shasta
(530) 225-5730

Sierra
(530) 289-3295

Siskiyou
(530) 842-8084

Solano
(707) 784-6675

Sonoma
(707) 565-6800

Stanislaus
(209) 525-5200

Sutter
(530) 822-7122

Tehama
(530) 527-8190

Trinity
(530) 623-1220

Tulare
(559) 624-7300

Tuolumne
(209) 533-5570

Ventura
(805) 654-2781

Yolo
(530) 666-8133

Yuba
(530) 749-7855

A wooden sign on a sidewalk with American flags in the background. The sign is white with a red and blue border and contains the text "VOTE HERE" in large blue letters. Below it, the text "POLLING PLACE" is written in smaller blue letters. The sign is supported by two wooden legs. In the background, several American flags are visible, and a building is partially seen.

**VOTE
HERE**

POLLING PLACE



For more information about voting and elections, call
(800) 345-VOTE (8683) or visit www.sos.ca.gov.

TTY/TDD (800) 833-8683

Research campaign contributions
<http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov>

The Secretary of State provides voter assistance
in 10 languages.

English (800) 345-VOTE (8683)

中文 /**Chinese** (800) 339-2857

हिंदी /**Hindi** (888) 345-2692

日本語 /**Japanese** (800) 339-2865

ខ្មែរ /**Khmer** (888) 345-4917

한국어 /**Korean** (866) 575-1558

Español/Spanish (800) 232-VOTA (8682)

Tagalog (800) 339-2957

ภาษาไทย /**Thai** (855) 345-3933

Việt ngữ /**Vietnamese** (800) 339-8163



RegisterToVote.ca.gov

Follow the California Secretary of State on Twitter @CASOSvote and like our page on Facebook.



California Secretary of State
www.sos.ca.gov

